



# Department of Justice

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## **FORMER RANKING MEMBER OF THE ARELLANO-FELIX ORGANIZATION PLEADS GUILTY**

San Diego, CA - Rigoberto Yanez-Guerrero, a former ranking member of the Tijuana Cartel/Arellano-Felix Organization (AFO) entered a guilty plea in federal court in San Diego today, announced United States Attorney for the Southern District of California Laura E. Duffy. Yanez was extradited by the government of Mexico to the United States in December 2010 to face charges in the Southern District of California for narcotics trafficking, money laundering and organized crime-related offenses. Long reputed to be one of the most notorious multi-national drug trafficking organizations, the AFO controlled the flow of cocaine, marijuana and other drugs through the Mexican border cities of Tijuana and Mexicali into the United States. Its operations also extended into southern Mexico, as well as Colombia.

According to court records and the defendants' admissions at today's hearing, Yanez admitted that he was a member of the AFO from approximately 1995 to 2001. During that time, Yanez served as a point of contact for Colombian traffickers wishing to do business with the AFO and transmitted money to Colombian drug traffickers. Yanez admitted that he participated in the shipment of approximately 5-10 tons of cocaine from Mexico to the United States. According to his plea, Yanez faces twenty years in prison and will forfeit \$1 million involved in or derived from his illegal activities.

The defendant entered his guilty plea before United States Magistrate Judge Barbara L. Major and is subject to final acceptance. Sentencing is scheduled for October 3, 2011, before United States District Court Judge Larry A. Burns.

This case is being investigated by agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation and prosecuted in the Southern District of California by Assistant United States Attorneys Joseph Green and James Melendres. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs provided significant assistance in the extradition. The investigation was coordinated by an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). The OCDETF program was created to consolidate and coordinate all law enforcement resources in this country's battle against major drug trafficking rings, drug kingpins, and money launderers.

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